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ASIA/INDIA - New violence and arbitrary arrests against Christians

New Delhi (Agenzia Fides) - New violence against Christian communities in different places in India: As reported to Fides by the "All India Christian Council" (AICC) – a coalition that unites Christians of different denominations, established in 1998 to protect religious minorities - accidents were recorded in the states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.
As stated in a note sent to Fides, on 6 October, the Protestant Pastor Arulraj was attacked by a group of Hindu activists of the extremist organization "Bajrangdal" in the district of Thane, in Maharashtra. The militants broke into his church in Kalva, hitting him with violence and taking him to the police, where the Pastor was arrested for alleged "forced conversions". On the same day, the lay Christian Anil Kumar was severely beaten by a mob of dozens of Hindu radicals in Siddapur, in the state of Karnataka. The man is now in hospital in intensive care, and is in critical condition. A few days before, a group of Hindu fanatics led two brothers by force, both Christians to the Hindu temple, telling them they had to deny their faith and convert to Hinduism. When they refused, a crowd beat and threw them out of their village, in the district of Kondagoan, in the state of Chhattisgarh, where they lived. As reported to Fides, in recent weeks the police of the state of Madhya Pradesh arrested 14 Christians after a group of Hindu extremists violently interrupted their prayer meeting, accusing them of "forced conversions". The faithful were eventually released simply because "the accusation was completely unfounded: people were present at the meeting of their own free will". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 11/10/2013)

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